Vol. XXVII, No. 9. April 24, 1930

THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

ACTION AND CERTAINTY[1]

DEWEY'S philosophy is not a set of propositions: it is a national movement. On good instrumental grounds this is what it ought to be. To this extent Dewey might be willing to agree that the real and the ideal are one! At any rate, on his own theory, the right way to estimate his philosophy would be to examine, not the propositions, but the movement.

Before I grasped this point I wasted much labor in the attempt to criticise Dewey's propositions. In 1897 or thereabouts I published a complete refutation of the Dewey-McClelland method of teaching number. That method proposed to define numbers by ratios, so that the number one was expounded, not as the first cardinal integer, but as the ratio of anything to another thing of the same size. It thus required two objects to define "one." Pointing this out in my first philosophical essay, I received my first philosophical shock in the perfect impassivity with which Dewey received his theoretical ruin. I doubt whether to this day he is aware of the disaster, or of the existence of my article. Occasional subsequent onslaughts on my part have been equally conclusive.

I might be inwardly troubled, even now, by this godlike calm of Dewey's under fire if I had not recently witnessed his equal serenity under a great wave of world-wide good-will—not untouched, but adequate and unperturbed. Living as he does in a sphere beyond the good and evil of praise and criticism, I have come to regard him as an authentic human symbol of The Absolute! I shall therefore not hesitate, on this occasion, to renew the discussion. That, I think, is what he would desire. I can imagine him saying, as Socrates—under less happy circumstances—once said: "To-day, if we can not revive the argument, you and I will both shave our locks"!

But let me begin by saying something of what I have learned from this philosophy. I owe much to the habit, painfully acquired, of looking for the meaning of terms and propositions in what they lead to, and especially in what they lead us to do. The blank face of a proposition is deceptive: its very self is in its working out. I venture even to embroider a little upon this theme. The work of a proposition is often less a construction than a fight. It has been of

[1] Read at the meeting of the American Philosophical Association, December 30, 1929, New York City.

the greatest help to me, especially in reading the history of ideas, to consider propositions in terms of their *fighting-value.*

Take the proposition, All men are created equal, as it came from the pen of Thomas Jefferson. What did Jefferson suppose that to mean? Mr. Archibald Grimke accuses Jefferson of insincerity because he was, and remained, a slave-holder. But Jefferson's eye was on another battle. His dictum had nothing to do with the fight against slavery, but with the fight against a governing class, pretending a natural superiority and a divine right. This was the fighting-meaning of his thesis, and he can not on this count be called insincere.

Or consider the doctrine of Nationality as it appeared in the nineteenth century. The foreign ministers of Great Britain evoked this principle in order to support the efforts of Greece and Italy to become autonomous. It did not occur to them that zealous formal logicians would extend the same principle to India and other portions of the Empire. That doctrine was intended by them to do specific work in Europe; an indiscriminate extension to other fields and other campaigns, however true to the verbal surface, was false to the fighting-sense of the idea.

In public law and in theology, the interpretation of all general formulæ must be sought in their original fighting-purport, and logical extension runs the risk of complete impertinence. The Monroe Doctrine in its own day had specific work to do: for Roosevelt, by logical extension, it did vastly different work; and now, still other and unexpected work—as in raising misunderstanding with our neighbors to the South and in hindering our coöperation with the League of Nations. The charge of insincerity here rests rather upon the logicians than upon those who look to the original fighting-value of the formula.

I presume that instrumentalism itself has a fighting-value, and that much of its meaning lies therein.

It has clearly some important work to do, not solely in the minds of the philosophical fraternity, but in the minds of wide masses of the American people. Now this people has been, and is, a vigorously active people; and it has been widely assumed that this practical bent has predisposed us to be pragmatists. This, I believe, is the precise reverse of the truth. It is a commonplace of social psychology that the active temper tends to dogmatism: the active man, like the active crowd, needs to assume something as fixedly true, beyond the reach of enquiry, a *pou sto* that justifies and supports a strong thrust. Common action nourishes itself on slogans, not on hypotheses, and the typical "man of action" displays a set jaw and an unyielding maxim. It is because we are dominantly a people of deeds

that we are inclined to be a dogmatic nation, believing stiffly in eternal principles, final conventions, natural rights, an unchanging Constitution and mechanical theologies. The great public work of the instrumental philosophy has been to limber up the ways of knowing of this people, to reduce fixed dogmas to working-hypotheses fit for experiment; to give the intellectually traditional, authority-seeking, hero-worshipping American the courage of his own experience. As a people we do believe in the dignity of labor (and so far as I can see, we are the only people under the sun, unless it be Russia, who really have that belief in their bones). We must carry this belief over into the dignity of *a laboring philosophy,* arising out of and pertinent to existing crises, not to ancient ones.

It is because America is *not* instinctively pragmatic that pragmatism has had, and still has, much fighting work to do.

Among the professionals likewise, it has to combat those traits which lend support to this impulsive popular dogmatism, such as the idle securities and finalities of abstract truth, or the lingering traces of those gods of Epicurus who do not concern themselves with human affairs. Especially it has been charged to widen the scope of the inductive methods, hypothesis and verification, in the field of social philosophy, and thereby to render our moral thinking flexible and contemporaneous—not to destroy the law and the prophets, nor yet to fulfill them (for that, too, would be looking backward in a way), but to endow them with the divine capacity of perpetual self-regeneration.

This is to make philosophy a highly responsible undertaking, indeed the most responsible of human enterprises. It is at once a promise to the common man that philosophy shall mean something to him; and it is a promise (not without an admonition) to the philosopher that when he has given his thinking its due prospective significance, philosophy will once more bear its due part in the national life. When our work becomes so much a matter of public importance that some one of us is asked to drink the hemlock, solely on account of his philosophical teaching, then at least we shall have learned a part of the lesson of instrumentalism.

These, in my judgment, are some of the continuing good works of instrumentalism; they constitute its instrumental truth.

And now I have to record why I am not wholly satisfied with this variety of truth. I believe that we must continue to judge the validity of propositions in some independence of their working. If this is true, it will not be out of place to look once more at the propositions of instrumentalism apart from their working- or fighting-value.

(The mere fact that we can make this distinction goes to illustrate

the argument. And if the instrumentalist should be so unwary as to defend these propositions, merely as propositions, his defense would amount to a surrender of his position. For he would be recognizing meaning apart from working. In this case, the theoretical critic has the field to himself, and the argument comes to an abrupt end. Let us waive this point!)

It would hardly be necessary to restate these familiar propositions except to show what limited portion of Dewey's philosophy I plan to deal with, and to make clear what version of his doctrine I am taking for discussion. The central thesis of instrumentalism I take to be this:

(1) That the meaning of conceptions and propositions is always functional. They spring, not out of blank presentation, but out of hesitation, perplexity: they are projects of solution, promissory and hypothetical in character. Their validity or truth consists in doing what they thus claim to do, namely, in resolving the difficulty, and in being, in this sense, verified.

From this would necessarily follow these corrollaries:

(2) That there is no strictly immediate truth;

(3) That there is no strictly stable or eternal truth;

(4) That there is no *a priori* truth; and, in sum,

(5) That there can be no significant theoretical certainty.

My effort will be, not to introduce novelty into the examination of these doctrines, but simply to express as clearly as possible my persisting difficulties, and to reduce them, where I can, to a principle.

My difficulty with the first proposition, the definition of trueness, tends to condense itself into a principle which we might call *the non-correspondence of meaning and working.* To every conception and to every general proposition there may be attached an indefinite variety of workings; to every working, in turn, a variety of meanings. If the meaning were to be found in the working, there should be a unique and unambiguous correspondence betweeen these entities: this correspondence does not exist.

Our proposition, All men are equal, will serve to illustrate the point. Not all of this proposition was at work in Jefferson's day: more and other work was capable of coming out of it. In spite of Jefferson's pre-occupation, it was legitimate to set that same generality to work on the slavery business: it still has work on hand, far beyond Jefferson's horizon, in the treatment of backward peoples, and who knows what further, to the end of time. Its identity and life as a proposition can not be limited by the special perplexities of any one age. Nor can it be identified with the sum of a series of the indefinitely many possible workings it may sponsor. For it has a

present meaning of some sort, whereas many of these possible programs of action are, at any given time, not so much as contemplated.[2] If we only know a thing when we see what comes of it, then indeed, we never know anything; for we never have in hand what is yet to eventuate.

Look at this non-correspondence from the other end. Assume (what is not highly improbable) that Jefferson began first with his fight and then cast about for a generality to sanction the conflict he felt to be inevitable. Is it logically required that he should have lighted on just this maxim about human equality? If we knew by inspection just what universal is exemplified in a given particular, law, induction, and living would be much simpler than they are. The versatility of mathematicians and physicists in setting up divergent hypotheses which lead to the same phenomena has prepared us to believe that no course of action is uniquely dependent upon any one theoretical premise. If the meaning is to be found solely in the progress from problem to solution-in-action, we should have to agree that any one of a number of "rationalizations" of this process would be verified by its success. This conclusion being eminently unacceptable, we are driven to locate the center of meaning in the proposition, and to regard it as separable from any specific course of action.

The non-correspondence between meaning and working begins in the process of conception, as an incommensurableness between *objects* and *interests*.

I am hungry: that is a state of dissatisfaction, favorable for starting a thinking process. I see a red apple: I at once conceive it as a possible food. That conception is clearly functional: it is a promissory hypothesis and carries a plan of action definitely related to my hunger. But I note that the redness of the apple, or for that matter its apple-ness, has no essential relation to its food-interest. A baked potato would do the same. I can not, therefore, regard the apparition of the apple as being just covered by, or

[2] The class of all the possible programs of action derivable from a given generality is a class which is in fact never contemplated, and which is probably in strict logic not contemplable. But the meaning of the proposition is contemplable, otherwise it would be impossible to "apply" it to new circumstances, or to "deduce" from it further plans of action. From what are the new applications derived? Surely not from previous programs, such as Jefferson's. Then from something distinguishable therefrom: that something different is the meaning of the proposition.

It must be noted, too, that some programs may lead to auspicious, others to inauspicious conclusions; some may eventuate as they promise, others may lead to disappointment. The solving, or verifying, outcome of any one group of programs can not guarantee that of others. Hence no finite series of verifications can constitute the truth.

exhausted in, that food-interest; nor is my food-interest exhausted in the apple. There is something in the apple-fact, and therefore in the apple-idea, which extends beyond any interest and any process which I then and there project. The active-meaning omits much of the fact-meaning: the fact-meaning (or object-idea) appears primary, admitting the active-meaning as a temporary rider, due to a momentary and somewhat accidental relationship. The fact-meaning, based on presentation, contains indeed the possibility of much as yet unimagined use and interest, and also the exceptional possibility of uselessness. But the two, object and interest, clearly have no common measure and there is no way to make them precisely congruent. Thus the instrumental element in idea-making presupposes an immediate or presentational element as more fundamental.

In his notable chapter on "The Play of Ideas,"[8] Dewey recognizes the absence of one-to-one correspondence between ideas and plans of action. He does not, however, draw the consequence which seems inescapable, namely, that the working-test of truth is in a perilously loose relation to the proposition tested, and will yield to a more direct test when we can get it.

The lover, unable to perceive directly how he stands in the regard of his beloved, is driven to the method of hypothesis and verification: "If she loves me, she will make a friendly response to this advance, appear at the window when I sing, answer this letter." He must rest his case for the moment on a succession of progressively bolder pragmatic tests. The beloved, in the same situation, if she finds herself forbidden the initiative implied in all experiment, may be momentarily reduced to plucking the petals from daisies—I am not sure whether this is instrumental! But both maintain a hope for the more nearly immediate evidence of avowal, and the ideal of telepathic perception. Such immediate evidence is indeed dangerous evidence, in this case, without a long-continued series of good works; but clearly that series of works might attain pestilential length unless it could sometime soon reveal its essential inwardness by direct expression.

Or take an instance like this: In the study of radioactivity, it early became a question whether these so-called "rays" are really vibrations or discrete particles shot off from radio-active elements at high velocity. Somebody is led to suspect that the *alpha*-rays are nothing more nor less than positively charged atoms or helium. But there is no hope of observing directly any such ray, still less an individual atom of helium. So one tests deductions from the hypothesis, such as this, that the atomic weights of elements in the uranium-

[8] *The Quest for Certainty*, pp. 156, 158.

radium series ought to differ by multiples of the atomic weight of helium, which turns out to be the case. This and other verifications tend to confirm the hypothesis; but they still leave it possible (and widely believed) that these hypothetical atoms are merely signs for reckoning, with only a remote symbolic relationship to any spatial fact.

Now one day Sir William Crookes invents the spinthariscope. And here under a lens one perceives, not the atoms to be sure, but the individual sparkles which occur when these minute entities bombard the screen of zinc sulphide there focussed. The collisions can be located and counted. The helium atom takes on a numerical and spatial individuality. This kind of corroboration of the hypothesis has a wholly different cogency from that of successful practical prediction. It is presentational. Manipulative activities are required to get it; but they are *irrelevant to its force.* The primary meaning of verification lies there, and we resort to it whenever we can get it.

Since only a part of a general proposition can do work at any time, an instrumental confirmation can always be had for a proposition which is only partially true.

Half-truths actually do a vast amount of valiant service in the world, namely, when they announce that half which is for the time being ignored. Thus, if men are too well steeped in tradition, it is in order to preach the gospel that "All things change." This half-truth will for a time be instrumentally justified. Then, when under this teaching men have become so flexible and shifty as to lack all spine and consistency, its star begins to set, and the times are ripe for the complementary half-truth, that "Whatever is real is permanent," which may then receive the same kind of confirmation.

This epochal variability in the working-power of partial truths (and most of the working-truths of history I judge to have been of this sort) tends to bring our perceptions of truth into that rhythm in which some sort of "dialectical" process can begin. Such a process is bound to commence when one observes his own vacillation, and tries to remedy it. What requires the revision is not any failure of the instrumental working—the half-truths could continue to labor in alternate shifts—it is the demand for inner consistency. The structural principle thus announces itself as something again independent of the pragmatic principle. Not at odds with it: for there can be no hostility between Dewey and Barbara. Only, the interest in trueness tends to migrate away from the periphery of consequences to the center where Barbara spins out the materials of immediacy into a coherent, continuous fabric.

So far, I have dealt with the first two propositions, the instrumental definition of truth, and the thesis that there is no strictly

immediate truth. Now consider the third thesis, that there is no eternal truth.

It is evident that the demand for consistency is at the same time a demand for *stability* in propositions. That is, the kind of truth we want is one we can hold to in all circumstances. The business of the dialectic is to find a conception of things which will *hold good,* and not for a little while, nor for an epoch, but always. If we prefer to translate stability by eternity, by way of indicating the limit to which stability tends, there is no harm done. The demand is the same whether there is much or little or no such ideally stable truth available.

And let us note that the need in question, while it is a logical need, is not merely logical. Nor is it merely a psychological oddity, such as marks the temperamentally active type of humanity, of which we were earlier speaking: it lies in the nature of all action. For all action intends to change something in particular: and in order to effect just this alteration in the world, the frame of action must hold still! The maxim for action is: Regard the universe as static except where you want it to budge. The ideal situation for the man who wants to move things is to have an unalterable conviction at his back: "Here I stand, I can not otherwise, God help me." The man who can say that will either make things happen or be himself obliterated.

Nothing to my mind more strikingly illustrates, and at the same time criticises, the instrumental principle than the immense working qualities of propositions supposed to be not only eternal but transcendent as well. Theological orthodoxies and heterodoxies have sometimes been stupidly adored in that detached and footless contemplation which is the *bête noire* of the instrumentalist. But they have at least as often appeared in history as *things done!* Thus Carlyle writes of those intractable heathen, the Wends, in the early days of Brandenburg: "Being highly disinclined to conversion," he says, "they once and again burst up, got hold of Brandenburg, and *did frightful heterodoxies there"!* After two centuries of clash these Wends were either blown up like dry powder or else "damped down into Christianity," which implies that they began to *do orthodoxy,* and that the new deeds were of a markedly different cast. In either case, it was a *doxy* that they did: good instrumentalism, but with an absolute for an implement or battle axe.

Is it not a momentous thing for our theory of truth that all major plans for human action, whether or not we who look backward, can see them tied to half-truths, have tried to get hold of absolutes and universals? And please note: it is *not for moral holidays* that these absolutes have been required.

Why, to fight British Torydom or slavery, do Thomas Jefferson and his successors reach out for a formula about "All men," instead of taking some legend that will snugly fit the moment's case? Is it because they do not want this day's business to be itself temporary and abstract and to be all undone and done over? And is it because they know that *the fruit of action can be no more permanent than the sight it comes out of* that they need to see the momentary effort in its setting and make the whole of things a party to what they now propose to do? I suspect that nothing short of a true property of all men would have *worked* for Jefferson's revolution: it was an eternal verity of some sort that King George was disowning, and it would take that same eternal verity to defeat him. Let us say, if we think so, that Jefferson got only a relative and approximate truth: I only remark that such a suspicion on his part would have lamed him for the moment, and sent him searching for another and more durable universal. It is not the scorn of action, it is the love of it, which prompts the quest for theoretical certainty, such as one can have before action begins. No one can be mad, of anger or devotion, unless he is first sure of something.

I suspect that at bottom Dewey is as little enamored of incessant change and relativity in the world of judgment as anyone. In commenting on Charles Peirce, he dwells approvingly on Peirce's idea of reality: "Reality," he says, "means the object of those beliefs which have after prolonged and coöperative enquiry become stable; and truth is the quality of those beliefs."

What is meant by a belief "becoming stable"? If we can identify the belief during the period of its variation, there would appear to be a core of it that is not affected by the variation. There is, of course, no incompatibility between the persistence of a truth, and its change in the sense of clarification and growth. We may agree with Dewey that "the scientific attitude, as an attitude of interest in change instead of interest in isolated and complete fixities, is necessarily alert for problems,"[4] and its work forever unfinished. But it is equally evident that the whole scientific and experimental undertaking aims at and believes in permanence. For unless experiment can establish something, and unless something of what we suppose "established" stays established, endures, accumulates, the whole experimental business becomes a fool's paradise.

The corpus of knowledge is at no moment static: but we know this, that *change does not eat out what is true in it.* From this two things follow. First, that survival becomes an empirical criterion of trueness, so that for instrumentalism also the only truth which fully deserves the name is eternal truth. Second, that whatever

[4] *The Quest for Certainty.*

turns out by survival to have been the true element in our present beliefs, we *now have that truth,* and have had it, whether or not we can now extricate it from its adulterants.

But of what advantage is this present possession of eternal truth, if we never know certainly what it is?

The answer lies in that aspect of truth which we call the *a priori.* If there is any *a priori* truth, it is presumably of the durable variety; and might conceivably furnish something to hold to, for purposes of action, while we are waiting for the rest of our durable truth to survive! But is there any such truth?

It is hard to see how anyone who places faith in scientific method can doubt the *a priori.* For scientific method (which we may allow to be the only fruitful method, because it is a composite of every method) necessarily makes appeal to truths which can never be tested.

Take the assumption that the standard measure of length remains constant. About the standard meter-stick in Paris, or any other physically extant measure, I may refuse to make that assumption. I may imagine it subject to FitzGerald Contractions, or any other type of distortion I please. But in that case I conceive myself as measuring the altered length in terms of a measure which does not vary. An assumption which we can not avoid making, and which we assume when we try to test it, may fairly be called an *a priori* proposition.

Kant in his pragmatic moments made use of another variety of *a priori* judgment. His postulates of practical reason, as he thought, were such as to make very tangible differences in behavior and experience: but these eventualities need not be waited for, inasmuch as they were *necessary consequences* of the postulates. They could be known in advance. Instrumentalism seems to adopt the view that we do not know what results are going to be until we reach them. But why? Why must the relation between a belief and its working-out be purely factual? If the consequences really pertain to that belief, the connection is not accidental, and it must be theoretically possible to foresee them. As an ancestor of pragmatism, Kant's method here seems to deserve reconsideration. Wherever necessary consequences can be perceived and evaluated in advance, we have an *a priori* judgment.

Our more general ethical standards seem to be of this nature. With all the immense force of experience and social tradition in molding our ethical sense, it is not yet obvious to me that the experience of eventualities can ever instruct us in the primitive distinction between right and wrong. We can hardly adopt the view (to quote a colleague) that Cain did not know it was wrong to kill Abel until

after he had done so. Unless the discovered consequence confirmed an uneasy foreboding of his own, already ethical, it could teach him nothing except that he had made an unfortunate decision. Nor can we adopt the view that the "lost causes" of mankind are proved by the outcome to have been somehow illicit. I am wholly convinced that it is wasteful, and may be vicious, to contemplate impossible ideals; that an ideal ought to be a pressure toward technical embodiment; that if ends are holy, the use of means is not less so. But how are we to know which ideals are possible and which are not? If we are to avoid the vice of cherishing impossible ideals, we must be guided either by an *a priori* knowledge of what ideals are possible or impossible, or by an *a priori* knowledge of what ideals are right. If we assume (with Joan of Arc, for example) that what is right must be somehow possible, we are relieved of the effort to foresee ultimate outcomes; the whole burden of judgment rests on the prior assurance of rightness. The event of failure reacts, not on the validity of the ideal, but on the wisdom of the means used or the energy of the agent. The defeated reformer, lover, patriot may have to curse himself as a fool: but he has still to say, "That for which I tried had the quality of goodness in it: my knowledge of that quality was prior to eventualities, and remains unmoved by them."

An element of knowledge may be *there* and may be effective long before it can be isolated, as children cut corners long before they can announce that the straight line is the shortest distance. It is not absurd to suppose that *a priori* knowledge may have a *de facto* existence, and yet a very belated official recognition. I wish to commend to your judgment a view of *a priori* knowledge which sees it as *growing out of experience.* We all want to be good empiricists; we have all grown humble in respect to the value of abstract rational anticipations of experience. Most of us, I believe, would like to join Dewey in getting away from the old passive copying empiricism, and in uniting with a better brand some recognition of the active contribution of the thinker: we believe Kant was right in seeking a synthesis of the empirical and the rational, and we further agree in not being satisfied with his proposals. May I suggest, then, that the office of experience is not solely to supply raw material, nor to provide simple ideas, nor yet to tease knowledge out into the ventures of action, but to present connections as factual in which we may, by slow degrees, recognize the necessary. The *a priori* is an element of knowledge which shells out of our changing empirical judgments as something implicitly presupposed and invariant. We may call it the *uncovered a priori.* And if the principle of this uncovering be admitted, we may willingly consult experience until the end of time for ascertaining the full measure of that *a priori* knowledge which even now we are using.

One such *a priori* element I seem to find uncovered in Dewey's *Quest for Certainty*. It occurs in a passage which, rejecting "fixed beliefs about values" so far as their contents are concerned, mentions one value which no future experience can dislodge. This invariant value is, to put it briefly, the value of trying to realize value. More fully, it is the value "of discovering the possibilities of the actual and striving to realize them."[5] Devotion to this value is declared invincible; it is the fit kernel for a forward-looking religious attitude toward the world. I need not emphasize the importance of this passage.

It constitutes of itself a comment on another thesis of instrumentalism, namely, that all values are immanent, human-born and man-achieved; and that we do well to get rid of their traditional transcendent moorings.

To me this doctrine often comes with a sense of relief; as if we would take a distinct step ahead in replacing the primordial value-reservoir of a certain type of idealism by those prospective and possible values which stir millions of finite beings to continued effort. Surely the best qualities of experience are things achievable, not antecedently there. The equality of men of Jefferson's faith,—who can say it is *there*? Suppose we regard it rather as something to be brought about. To treat men as equal is to bring equality to pass. We can *confer* equality: the responsibility falls on our shoulders, and the world, which seemed a monstrous enigma under the doctrine of the is-ness of equality, becomes once more a hopeful place.

But this change does not dispel the metaphysical horizon. If value is creatable, the universe *is* already the entertainer of this possibility. Possibility is neither a human product, nor a mere form of expectancy: it is an objective property of things, antecedent to our action. Further, it is not there by accident: the universe which contains it can not be conceived as indifferent to its actualization. Possibility thus takes on the hue of obligation; and no single value in the human scene remains unaffected by this relationship. For a value which in our cosmic setting we are due to work out acquires a momentousness not attainable by a value which we merely *may* work out if we are so disposed and have the needed energy.

The value of trying to realize value appears to me to belong to this metaphysical setting of action; and if we wished to apply to it the opprobrious terms, "transcendent," "eternal," or even "absolute," the objections would arise chiefly, I think, from the traditional connotations of these words. I will confine myself to calling it a case of the uncovered *a priori*, and to making a plea that we extend the use of the principle by which this invariant is uncovered.

[5] P. 304.

For we are going to get truth by endless experimenting, and there is presumably a charter for this experimenting which is not itself establishable by experiment. We are going to get truth by induction, and whatever the inductive postulate is, we can not prove *it* by induction. To my mind, experiment and induction are ways of trying to unearth necessities; and there is a prior necessity laid on us for continuing this search for necessity, whose authority no success can confirm and no failure unsettle. Here we have a small group of *a priori* elements, which are in a way formal and transcendent; that is, they are not in the fight, because they constitute the arena and the urge which makes the fight go on! I am disposed to see in them available theoretical certainties which underly all human action. To them the more concrete certainties may attach themselves in proportion to that power of genius which, in the midst of incoherent and disagreeing empirical cases, can discern the universal element, not perfectly but clearly enough to do a man's work in the world.

Dewey recommends a philosophy "willing to abandon its supposed task of knowing ultimate reality and to devote itself to a proximate human office."[6] This can never happen: for philosophy can not perform the second function without the first. Men are like tigers in one respect which is to the credit of both: they can't enjoy food until they can see their way out of the trap. The amelioration of details leaves them ill at ease while they are without confidence in the frame of things,—if only a negative confidence that its uncontrollable reaches are not certainly brewing the spume of death to them and their works. In any case, we shall do the human offices with all the wisdom we can muster; but it is the peculiar province of philosophy to read and truly report the ultimate auspices of these deeds, be these auspices good or ill.

I plead for the recovery of a Platonic element in our way of knowing. A renewed grip of the changeless vein in things and an inkling of totality, so far from veiling the transitional, or withering experiment, or drugging the spirit of enterprise, would show themselves the very nerves of action. There is nothing infusible in these two things, the great work of Dewey and the Platonic vision. Knowing and doing are not the same thing: nothing but confusion can be got from identifying them, for in that case activity itself could not be known. No doubt they are of a piece, inseparable: they reach their culmination together; knowing is at its height at the point where the present deed plays against the outer reality. But as doing, like the galloping hoof, gathers the earth into it and puts the earth behind it, so about the moment's knowledge

[6] *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 47.

born in that same contact, there spreads the horizon and the stable arch of the sky.

When Dewey accepts for himself somewhat tentatively the designation "experimental idealist," then we who have been thinking of ourselves as idealistic experimentalists, may be permitted to recognize a kinship and to join in the long quest for the remainder of our certainty, some of which we think we have in hand.

WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

PRAGMATISM AND CURRENT THOUGHT[1]

IT is somewhat difficult in the case of pragmatism to determine what are its essential and distinctive theses. That there should be thirteen distinguishable pragmatisms, however, is not a peculiarity: these could be set alongside the thirty-seven idealisms and fifty-one realisms. William James is reported to have said that he was pleased to find that pragmatism had this wealth of meaning; he accepted all thirteen. In any case, such variety merely marks the fact that pragmatism is a movement, not a system. Its beginnings are attributable to Charles Peirce. But Peirce has something the quality of a legendary figure in American philosophy. His originality and the wealth of his thinking are not fully evident in his published writings. Apart from a few persons—amongst whom were James and Royce—some of his most important conceptions can have had little influence, because they have never been printed: and the coincidence of these doctrines with the views of later pragmatists is distinctly limited. James's enthusiasm for them must in part be set down to that catholicity of appreciation which was so notable a part of his character. James called himself a "radical empiricist" as well as a pragmatist, and the connection, or lack of it, between these two aspects of, or strands in, his philosophy, has been a matter of some question. We must, of course, look to Professor Dewey's writings for the integration and systematic elaboration of pragmatism. But no one could have exercised the quite unparalleled influence which he has had upon American thought without giving rise to a wealth of resultant views which is a little confusing when one tries to grasp their coincidence or central meaning. Hence it is not a matter for surprise if those most deeply influenced by him show a tendency to drop the term, lest a too extended agreement with one another be suggested, and that those of us who still have ventured to use it are doubtful of our right to the designation.

If, then, I venture to suggest what is the core of pragmatism, and

[1] Read at the meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Dec. 30, 1929, New York City.

what I think may be the chief significance of it, both in philosophy and for other branches, I hope it will be understood that I do not take myself too seriously in the matter. This view is presented to those who will best know how to correct my mistakes.

Pragmatism is, as James indicated, not a doctrine but a method: viewed logically, it can be regarded as the consequence of a single principle of procedure. But this principle, though by itself it says nothing material in the field of metaphysics or epistemology, and though its application is by no means confined to philosophy, has nevertheless a wealth of philosophic consequences. It implies at least the outline of a theory of knowledge; and if it dictates no metaphysical theses, at least it rules out a good deal which has been put forward under that caption, and it operates as a principle of orientation in the search for positive conclusions.

I refer, of course, to the pragmatic test of significance. James stated it as follows: "What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle."[2] Peirce formulated it with respect to substantive concepts rather than propositional notions—though the two come to the same thing: "Our idea of anything is our idea of its sensible effects. . . . Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."[3] It is one importance of this pragmatic test that it is so obviously valid and final: once it has been formulated, there can be no going back on it later without conscious obscurantism. Any consequence of it, therefore, shares in this imperative and binding character. Peirce's dictum draws our attention to the fact that there is a kind of empiricism which is implicit in the pragmatic test: What can you point to in experience which would indicate whether this concept of yours is applicable or inapplicable in a given instance? What practically would be the test whether your conception is correct? If there are no such empirical items which would be decisive, then your concept is *not* a concept, but a verbalism.

If one does not find in Professor Dewey's writings any terse

[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 45.

[3] "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," *Chance, Love and Logic*, p. 45. Compare: ". . . Since obviously nothing that might not result from experiment can have any bearing on conduct, if one can define accurately all the conceivable experimental phenomena which the affirmation or denial of a concept could imply, one will have therein a complete definition of the concept, and *there is nothing more in it*. For this doctrine he [the writer, Peirce] invented the name pragmatism."—"What Pragmatism Is," *Monist*, Vol. 15, p. 177.

formulation which is exactly parallel (and of that I am not sure), this is only because here the pragmatic test is clothed with its consequences; it pervades the whole, and is writ large in the functional theory of the concept. Ideas are plans of action; concepts are prescriptions of certain operations whose empirical consequences determine their significance. This connotation of action is not, of course, a new note; it appears in Peirce's emphasis upon conduct and experiment, and in James's doctrine of the "leading" character of ideas. Is this functional theory of the concept implicit, like empiricism, in the pragmatic test?

So far as Professor Dewey himself is concerned, it would appear that this doctrine antedates his explicit pragmatism, and may have been the root of it. (Perhaps he will tell us.) It appears in his paper on "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," the first important document for "functional psychology," published in 1896.[4] He there criticises current psychological theory as not having sufficiently avoided the fictitious abstractions of sensationalism. "The sensation or conscious stimulus is not a thing or existence by itself; it is a phase of a coördination."[5] "A coördination is an organization of means with reference to a comprehensive end."[6] "The stimulus is that phase of the forming coördination which represents the conditions which have to be met in bringing it to a successful issue; the response is that phase of one and the same forming coördination which gives the key to meeting these conditions, which serves as instrument in effecting the successful coördination. . . . The stimulus is something to be discovered. . . . It is the motor response which assists in discovering and constituting the stimulus."[7] Substitute "sensation" or "sense data" for "stimulus," "operation" or "action" for "motor response," and what is here quoted will be found occupying a central place in all Professor Dewey's subsequent expositions of his pragmatic doctrine. Three years later, he wrote: "I conceive that states of consciousness . . . have no existence as such . . . before the psychologist gets to work." "Knowing, willing, feeling, name states of consciousness not in themselves, but in terms of results reached, the sorts of value that are brought into experience."[8]

[4] *Psychological Review*, Vol. 3, pp. 357–370. My attention was drawn to this by its citation in Boring's *History of Experimental Psychology*, pp. 540–541.

[5] *Loc. cit.*, p. 368.

[6] *Loc. cit.*, p. 365.

[7] *Loc. cit.*, p. 370.

[8] "Psychology and Philosophic Method," address before the Philosophical Union of the University of California, 1899, pp. 6 and 10. It is interesting to remember that in the preceding year, James presented the first statement of *his* pragmatism, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," under the same auspices.

If, then, I am right in the derivation here assigned, Professor Dewey's functional theory of knowledge is the necessary consequence of a methodological principle applied to psychology; namely, that concepts used should designate something concretely identifiable in experience, not abstractions apart from that which serves for their empirical discovery. Sensations, or sense data, are condemned as not thus identifiable apart from the responses to which they lead and the ends such action serves.

The functional theory of the concept has, as I have tried to show elsewhere, other grounds, of a more purely logical sort. Viewed in this way, however, and apart from psychological considerations, it is not, I think, a simple consequence of the pragmatic test, but has a conceivable alternative, namely, immediatism or the presentation-theory of knowledge. By this logical approach, one has to adduce reasons for repudiating the conception that empirical knowledge—or *some* empirical knowledge—is immediately given, in order to reach the conception that activity and its issue are indispensable and characterizing factors in empirical cognition. The theory that meanings connote action and truth connotes prediction, is implicit in the notion that truth and meanings are something *to be tested*; hence, that they do *not* bring their own warrant in being simply given.

I believe we here arrive at a turning-point in pragmatic theory.[9] On the one side, the pragmatic principle seems to stress the directly empirical. Put enough emphasis on that, and one might conceivably —though not validly, I think—arrive at a highly subjectivistic theory, of knowledge as immediate. On the other side, it stresses the limitation of meaning to what makes a verifiable difference, and of truth to what can be objectively tested. Follow out the consequences of *that,* and of the functional theory of knowledge which it implies, and I believe one is inevitably led to the doctrine that concepts are abstractions, in which the immediate is precisely that element which must be left out. To this point, I should like to adduce certain illustrations, drawn from contemporary science.

The new physics is, in good part, based upon certain applications of the pragmatic test. And to these physicists the validity of this methodological principle and the functional interpretation of conceptual meanings seem to be simply synonymous. One main premise of physical relativity is, of course, the impossibility of deciding which, of two bodies in relative motion, is at rest with respect to an absolute space. (We may remind ourselves that James's illustration

[9] When this was written, Professor Burtt's paper, "Two Basic Issues in the Problem of Meaning and of Truth," contributed to *Essays in Honor of John Dewey,* had not yet come to hand. I note with pleasure that a part of his paper and part of what is here written run parallel.

of the pragmatic test—the man and the squirrel—is simply an example of the relativity of motion to frames of reference.) In elaborating the consequences of this relativity of motion, it became necessary to repudiate other absolutes, such as length, time, simultaneity, etc.; and this was done by identifying these with the actual modes by which they can be tested—the pragmatic test once more. The resultant methodology may be generalized in what Bridgman calls "the operational character of concepts." "We evidently know what we mean by a length if we can tell what the length of any and every object is, and for the physicist nothing more is required. To find the length of an object we have to perform certain physical operations. The concept of length is therefore fixed when the operations by which length is measured are fixed: that is, the concept of length involves as much as and nothing more than the set of operations by which length is determined. In general we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; *the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations.*" [10]

Why does the physicist thus identify his concepts with operations of testing? Is it because the properties he is concerned with are peculiarly those which are difficult or impossible of immediate apprehension? Not at all. Suppose a critic to observe: "But of course your concept of length goes back to an immediately given somewhat. You test the relation of a particular length to the yardstick, but unless your yardstick were an immediate so-longness, directly apprehended, your concept of length would be entirely empty." He will reply that this immediate so-longness has nothing to do with physics, because it can not be tested. The *yardstick* can be tested; as it happens, the measurement of it will differ for different relative motions. But any immediate so-longness of it is something which makes no difference to physics: if it had one so-longness to *A* and another for *B*, that would be unverifiable and ineffable. It is the significance of the operational character of concepts to extrude such ineffables from physics. Subjectively it may be that *A* and *B* both seem to themselves at rest in the center of the universe, directly apprehending certain so-longnesses, so-heavinesses, felt endurances of things, and what not. But physical position and motion are simply relations to a frame of reference, physical time a relation to clocks; physical properties in general consist in those operations and relations by which they are assigned and tested. The standards are absolutely standards—that is, arbitrary—but they are not absolute in any other sense. The standard yardstick, or clock, or whatever, has its length or the measure of its seconds, etc., in an entirely similar and verifiable set of relations to other things, and only so. Any immediate

[10] *The Logic of Modern Physics*, p. 5; italics are in the text.

content of the concept is extruded by the principle of the pragmatic test. If your hours, as felt, are twice as long as mine, your pounds twice as heavy, that makes no difference, which can be tested, in our assignment of physical properties to things. If it *should* thus make a difference in our predication of properties, we should at once decide that one of us must be mistaken. Such decision would reveal our implicit recognition that our concept of the predicated property excludes this subjective element, and includes only the objectively verifiable relations.

The physical concepts are not, by this extrusion of the immediate, emptied of meaning. Their meaning is, as Bridgman says, in the operations of verification and their results; it is contained in that complex network of relationships which constitute the laws and equations and physical predications of which the science consists. The concept is, thus, merely a sort of configuration or relational pattern. Whatever the immediate and ineffable content which is caught in that net may be—for John Jones or Mary Doe or anybody—it does not enter into the science of physics. The resultant conception of the content of the science is admirably expressed by Eddington: "We take as building material *relations* and *relata*. The relations unite the relata; the relata are the meeting points of the relations."[11] The conceptual in knowledge is the element of pure structure or operational construction.

Thus the pragmatic test becomes a kind of law of intellectual parsimony, and leads, in science, to what might be called "the flight from the subjective." Physics is by no means an isolated example: the parallel thing has happened, or will happen, in every science, because it is simply the extrusion of what the science can not finally and conclusively test. Mathematics, being the oldest science, did it first. Geometry begins with rope-stretching and ends as the deductive elaboration of purely abstract concepts, the problem of the nature of space being handed over to physics and philosophy. Arithmetic begins with counting empirical things and ends in the logical structure of *Principia Mathematica*, for which the existence of the number 8 (for a certain type) requires an extraneous assumption. Just now mathematics threatens to go further and restrict itself to systems of operations upon marks. Psychology first got rid of the ineffable soul; a pragmatic psychologist then asked, "Does consciousness [as distinct from its content] exist?"; and now we have behaviorism, based on the methodological principle of restriction to what is objectively verifiable. If some of these movements go beyond what is necessary or valid, at least they exhibit the tendency, and the ground of it.

[11] *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 230.

Professor Dewey seems to view such abstractionism in science as a sort of defect—sometimes necessary but always regrettable; an inadequacy of it to the fullness of experience. In various ways, it seems to him to threaten the relations between knowledge and life. Professor Eddington's book suggests that a doubt on this point besets him too when, as physical scientist, he finds himself also constrained to assess philosophical significances. That the world as experienced and life as lived are not going to be thrown out of the window, goes without saying. Particularly for Professor Dewey, it seems to me that this apprehensiveness is misplaced, because he has himself indicated the main considerations essential for the solution of the problem which results—the problem of the relation of abstract concepts to the concrete and directly empirical. Time does not permit attention to all the pertinent considerations. But I wish to suggest one which is important, by a final illustration, drawn once more from physics.

As an eventual result of subatomic and quantum phenomena, the new physics has abolished imaginable matter. Analysis of the physical emerges finally in something like Schrödinger's Ψ-functions, in mathematical expressions of probability, concrete representation of which can only be approached in terms of an admittedly fictitious sub-ether of variable dimensions. Immediately apprehensible matter dissolves into mathematics. Two other expressions of this same abstractness of the physically ultimate occur in Eddington's later chapters: one is that statement about relations and relata, already referred to; the other is to the effect that physics reduces the concrete object to pointer-readings.[12] The elephant sliding down the grass slope is at once an immense flock of Ψ-functions getting integrated, and a set of pointer-readings. The two interpretations do not seem interchangeable. Let us fasten on the pointer-readings. Why reduce the elephant to pointer-readings? In the first place, because physics can not deal with the elephant as a whole. It comprehends a good many—perhaps most—of the elephant's properties, but that he is, for example, a wonderful fine fellow and very intelligent, must be omitted from physical consideration. Let us call that organization of properties which physics *can* deal with "the physicist's elephant." Why is the physicist's elephant reduced to pointer-readings? First because, with the apparatus oriented upon the elephant, the elephant *determines* the pointer-readings. Second, because such pointer-readings are a conveniently hybrid sort of reality: the apparatus and pointers being physical, their readings correlate with the properties of the elephant; and the readings being numerical, they translate those properties into mathematical values. The

[12] Pp. 251 ff.

significance of the pointer-readings is merely for the purpose of such translation. The last state of the physicist's elephant, like the last state of the electron, is in mathematical functions. But this last stage for the *physicist* is merely an intermediate stage of operations with respect to the elephant. The numerical values given by the pointer-readings are substituted for the variables in some mathematical equation expressing physical law. They thus determine a numerical value of some other mathematical function. This last can be translated back into something of the order of pointer-readings, and hence back into some other and previously undetermined property of the elephant—with the eventual result, perhaps, that we get the elephant safely into a box-car. Such eventual result is the reason for being of the whole set of operations. If it be asked, then, "Why reduce the elephant to mathematical functions?" the answer is that this is the best way known to man for getting him into the box-car.

The physicist's elephant is an abstraction, but a rather palpable sort of abstraction. All of him that the physicist finally deals with is what is common to the elephant and the pointer-readings; namely, a more abstract, a *very* abstract, configuration of relationships. This structure of relations is what, in general terms, the mathematical equations of physics express.

Thus if the last conceptual stage of the elephant—and of the physical in general—is in mathematics, or a set of relations of relata, it is not necessary to try to follow this transmogrification of the elephant, or of matter, with the imagination. Nor is it appropriate to cry shame upon the physicist for leaving the world of palpable elephants in favor of such unimaginable abstractions. The physicist's concept represents simply an intermediate stage in a process which begins and ends with elephants and such—not with the physicist's elephant even, but the one which slid down the bank and got put in the box-car.

As Professor Dewey points out, the physicist and mathematician simply take this intermediate stage off by itself and deal with it on its own account.[13] Thus if we reflect upon the functional theory of knowledge, I think we may come to the conclusion that there is no implication of it which is incompatible with the notion that concepts in general are abstractions—are even very thin abstractions. Because the function of concepts is not to *photograph* elephants but to get them into box-cars. Concepts represent simply that operational function of cognition by which it transforms the something given, with which it begins, into the something anticipated or something done, with which it ends. That they may have lost, or discarded as irrelevant, those elements of the concrete and immediate which char-

[13] See *The Quest for Certainty*, pp. 156 ff.

acterize direct perception and imagination, is nothing to the point. Goodness in a concept is not the degree of its verisimilitude to the given, but the degree of its effectiveness as an instrument of control. Perhaps Professor Dewey might even, with entire consistency, find less occasion to regret that the relatively undeveloped sciences of human affairs show a tendency to imitate this abstractness. When the social sciences attain that degree of abstractness, and consequent precision, which already characterizes physics and mathematics, perhaps they will have less trouble getting their social elephants into their social box-cars. Economics is the best developed of the social sciences, and a fair illustration.

To conclude: the fact that the pragmatic test seems, on the one hand, to demand that all meaning be found eventually in the empirical, and on the other, seems to induce a flight from the immediate and directly apprehensible into abstractions, is not, in reality, any contradiction or any difficulty. In one sense—that of connotation—a concept strictly comprises nothing but an abstract configuration of relations. In another sense—its denotation or empirical application—this meaning is vested in a process which characteristically begins with something given and ends with something done—in the operation which translates a presented datum into an instrument of prediction and control.

C. I. LEWIS.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

BOOK REVIEWS

Die Auffassungen und Weiterbildungen der Schopenhauerschen Philosophie. PAUL SALZSIEDER. Leipzig: Gustav Lunkenbein. 1928. 356 pp.

The question of the infiltration of Schopenhauer's ideas into modern thought has long been awaiting proper formulation and discussion. Salzsieder does not take up the problem in its entirety, but essays the less complicated task of tracing and critically evaluating only those *philosophic* ideas which *specifically avow* to be interpretations and developments of Schopenhauer's philosophy. There is no consideration of indirect influences or of systems similar to that of Schopenhauer in their conclusions but having their starting-points elsewhere. There is further no attempt made to throw light on the reasons for the late recognition of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

From Salzsieder's analysis it appears that Schopenhauer's proud claim of the organic unity of his system has been to a large extent challenged or denied. The several planks of his philosophy served as bases for the greatest variety of interpretations and continuations. To speak of a Schopenhaurian tradition or school is therefore misleading.

There have been in the main two *interpretations.* "The world is my idea" was the ground of the idealistic version of Herbart, Beneke, J. H. Fichte, Erdmann, Kuno Fischer, Deussen, and of several minor thinkers. "The world is my will" became the basis of the realistic interpretation of Frauenstädt and his followers. For a *development* of Schopenhaurian ideas, only the latter proved fruitful. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, the realistic emphasis on Schopenhauer's *voluntarism* became the foundation of a kaleidoscope of systems from E. von Hartmann's philosophy of the unconscious to Bilharz's ontrocentricism, from Bahnsen's and Mainländer's atheistic and pluralistic nihilism to Nietzsche's individualistic optimism, to mention only the more noteworthy continuations. At the same time, interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy shifted from his epistemology to his metaphysics and with the beginning of the twentieth century, his irrationalism (Windelband, Volkelt) and Romanticism (Haym, Joël, Seilleire) receive particular emphasis.

Crucial for a critical evaluation of the various interpretations of Schopenhauer is the question whether his philosophy does or does not possess an organic or *Gestalt*-aspect. Salzsieder's position on this point is equivocal. On the one hand, he condemns the several interpretations on the ground that each only "brought into view the specific standpoint of the author, that therefore the historical Schopenhauer does not appear in any of the interpretations and developments" (p. 356). What that historical system was, Salzsieder indicates only vaguely and mainly by implication, characterizing it "a unity of Kant and Plato." On the other hand, he definitely denies (p. 271) that there is any connection between Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge and the rest of his system. And his conclusion is that "manifold and discordant as is Schopenhauer's personality, so many-colored is his philosophy" (p. 354).

Salzsieder's view of Schopenhauer's philosophy as largely a mosaic in which the parts do not blend, makes clear why in his treatment *Schopenhauer's pessimism is almost totally ignored.* Except where he discusses systems (Mainländer, Bahnsen, Nietzsche), in which pessimism became the central theme—and here his analysis and especially his criticism of this aspect is obviously impatient and unsympathetic—Salzsieder directs his attention to the interpretations and developments of Schopenhauer's epistemology and voluntarism. His pessimism and the avenues of escape are slighted as if they were uncouth stepchildren who will not harmonize with the other members of the family.

In spite of some inconsistencies in Schopenhauer's philosophy it is questionable whether the view of its atomic character can be

upheld. However, be that as it may, it is clear that pessimism does play a decisive rôle in the system. Schopenhauer himself regarded his philosophy an organic whole in which the idea of "die Sinnlosigkeit des Daseins" occupied a central position. This pessimism is obvious enough in the conception of the blind, irrational Will, which is the ground for endless yearnings and inevitable frustrations. Equally clear is the pessimism implicit in the various avenues of escape outlined in the last two books of *The World as Will and Idea*. But Schopenhauer's epistemology, too, is an argument for the condemnation of the empirical world; for the categories of space, time, and casuality are the *principium individuationis* or the veil of Maya which transform the realm of Reality into the dream world of shadows. If a similar epistemology served some idealists with the ground for postulating a transcendental universe of perfection (Platonic tradition) and other idealists with the basis for proving the spiritual value of the empirical world (Berkeley and his followers), Schopenhauer's original construction lies in his use of the same premises to reach reverse conclusions.

Salzsieder's undue emphasis on Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge and cosmology leads him further to question the interpretation of Schopenhauer as an irrationalist and as a Romanticist. He points to the "Kantian element" in the system by which he means the rational *method* employed. However, the reference of the interpreters is to the *conclusion* reached: the all-pervasiveness of the irrational Will that allows the intellect only the *chance* existence of a parasite. And this irrationalism has proved to be the source of a good deal of anti-intellectualism that has taken form in current "life-philosophies," occultisms, theosophies, and expressionisms. In challenging Schopenhauer's alleged Romanticism, Salzsieder again points to the difference between the rational method that the philosopher employs and the poetic approach of the Romanticists. This difference exists, but the fact remains that both reach the same conclusions with regard to the dream-nature of the empirical world. And the connection between them is even closer. The Romantic yearning for the unattainable which can obviously never be appeased offers a psychological basis for pessimism. And it is precisely the fact that, due to the Will, man is doomed to the eternal fate of Tantalus, that furnishes Schopenhauer with an argument for "the worst of all possible worlds."

In view of the pivotal position that pessimism occupies in Schopenhauer's system, it may be asked why it was relatively neglected in philosophic literature. We suggest as part explanation the dominance of the theologic tradition in philosophy that in one form or another argues for a beneficient Supreme Principle. Kant's

restoration of God in the second *Critique*, Hegel's symbolic-dialectical apology for Christianity and Schelling's ultimate adherence to the dogma of revelation, were the particular forces in the way of a doctrine that offered no salvation in or after life. The most frequent attacks that pessimism was subjected to, at the time when under the urbane leadership of E. von Hartmann it became a popular fancy, was from theologians.

But if Schopenhauer's avowed pessimism has not found a strong echo, more can be said for his implied pessimism. His avenues of escape: philosophic contemplation, the esthetic experience, sympathy, and asceticism are the gates through which philosophers and poets, cosmic humanitarians and saints, have fled from a life of active experience into a realm of passive contemplation. Implying the futility of change and action, these "solutions" offer a thin pale haven where modern romantic idealists seek refuge.

Salzsieder's treatise is noteworthy. It reveals clarity of objective and within the limits indicated, it is a competent study. But when Salzsieder fails to consider Schopenhauer's pessimism and romanticism, he is neglecting those aspects of his philosophy which have exerted an appeal, perhaps as mighty and certainly as fatal—even to philosophers—than has Schopenhauer's discussion of the relation between the subject and the object.

HARRY SLOCHOWER.

COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

The Interpretation of Religion. JOHN BAILLIE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1928. Pp. xv + 477.

Intimate familiarity with the history of philosophy and clarity of metaphysical insight, joined to sturdy confidence in the cosmic significance of religious experience, give interest both as a critical and constructive treatment to Professor Baillie's inquiry into the nature of religion. Following closely the Kantian tradition, the author's approach suggests that of the Scottish idealists. The distinction of its development usually saves the great quantity of historical material which is introduced, from becoming burdensome.

The earlier chapters are devoted to critical considerations having to do with methodology in the study of religion. The nature of theology is examined, and its use of speculative method. It appears to be the author's belief, in summary, that philosophy stands in the same relation to theology as to any of the special sciences. The task of theology is to investigate human religious experience, which subsequently may be incorporated into a synoptic view of reality by philosophy. From this it is implied that theology, so far as possible, must work without philosophic preconceptions, and

that philosophy must accept the data presented by such theology, just as it would accept the observations of physics or biology. The modern theologian should seek to understand, not a particular religious position, or to expound it alone, but religion, or the religious consciousness, as such. As the moralist finds the moral strivings of his race, so the theologian finds its religious quest "reflected in microcosm in his own soul's experience." Religion must not be studied merely speculatively, but from the inside, for only so can be reached the basis of that certainty which characterizes the history of religious thought. Yet this study must be universalized, so that not a specific religion alone, but religious consciousness, shall be the object of theological inquiry.

The latter two-thirds of the book is devoted to the inquiry itself into the nature of religion. An effort to analyze faith as a phenomenon of human experience is followed by critical examination of the rationalistic, romantic, and intuitional theories, and finally, by a consideration of the account of religion in terms of man's consciousness of value. The author finds that a common difficulty lies in the failure of most theories to recognize the intimacy of relationship which exists between moral and religious experience. He takes it as his thesis that "the kind of intelligent or rational insight in which religion takes its rise is none other than *moral* insight, and that faith in God is thus in some sort an outgrowth of our consciousness of value" (p. 257). The roots of religious faith lie deep in man's knowledge of good and evil, which is taken to rest upon insight into values possessing ultimate status in the cosmos. Revelations of religious truth do not shine from beyond the stars, but glow in living experiences of the good.

It will be apparent from even so brief a summary, that the approach of the book is essentially theological. To some, its presuppositions will be unsatisfactory, if not actually unintelligible. To those, on the other hand, who hold a theistic position, its positive argument and particularly its critical insight, will be of genuine interest.

CLIFFORD BARRETT.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES.

JOURNALS AND NEW BOOKS

THE SYMPOSIUM. Vol. I, No. 2. Philosophy of Experiment: *E. A. Singer, Jr.* The Serpent's Enemy: *Felix Morrow.* The Dehumanization of Art: *José Ortega y Gasset.* Paul Valéry: *P. B. Rice.* On Defining Poetry: *James Burnham.* A Definition of Poetry: *Louis Grudin.*

REVUE D'HISTOIRE DE LA PHILOSOPHIE. 4e Année, Fasc. 1. Études cartésiennes. L'oisive adolescence de Descartes (1er article): *G. Cantecor.* Vers Novalis: *C. Estève.* Notes critiques sur le texte de l' "Éthique à Eudème": *H. Margueritte.*

THE PERSONALIST. Volume XI, Number 2. Grace and Free-will: *Benedetto Croce.* A Symposium: What Contribution does Contemporary Psychology make to Philosophy?: *Harold Chapman Brown, Ethel Sabin-Smith,* and *Shepherd Ivory Franz.*

AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY. Vol. VIII, No. 1. The Beginnings of Philosophy in Australia and the Work of Henry Laurie (II): *E. Morris Miller.* Psychology Literature and Human Nature: *C. F. Salmond.* The Function of Intellect: *H. Tasman Lovell.* The Philosophy of Capitalism: *R. B. Madgwick.* Theory and Practice in Morals—A Rejoinder: *T. A. Hunter.*

REVUE DE PHILOSOPHIE. 30e Année, No. 1. Sur la langue de saint Thomas: *F. Blanche.* L'intellect actif d'apres Jean Duns Scot: *S. Belmond.* L'idée du temps et la mémoire: *H. Dehove.* L'universal: *F.-X. Maquart.*

Archives de Philosophie. Vol. VII, Cahier II. Études sur saint Augustin (430–1930). R. Jolivet, Ch. Boyer, P. Monnot, F. Cavellem, B. Romeyer, R. de Sinety. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne. 1930. 272 pp.

Archives de Philosophie. Vol. VII, Cahier II. Supplément Bibliographie, No. 2. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne. 1930. 22 pp.

Bayet, Albert: La morale des Gaulois. Histoire de la Morale en France. Paris: Félix Alcan. 1930. xi + 295 pp. 35 frcs.

Gentile, Giovanni: Storia della Filosofia Italiana dal Genovesi al Gallupi. 2 vols. (Opere Complete di Giovanni Gentile.) Seconda Edizione con correzioni ed aggiunte. Milano: Fratelli Treves Editori. 1930. xv + 272 pp.; 260 pp.

Grudin, Louis: A Primer of Aesthetics. Logical Approaches to a Philosophy of Art. New York: Friede Covici. 1930. xvi + 247 pp. $3.00.

Kaufmann, Felix: Das Unendliche in der Mathematik und seine Aussehaltung. Leipzig & Wien: Franz Deuticke. 1930. x + 203 pp. 12 M.

Marcel, Gabriel: Journal Métaphysique. Bibliothèque des Idées. (2d ed.) Paris: Librairie Gallimard. 1927. xi + 342 pp.

Joël, Karl: Wandlungen der Weltanschauung. Eine Philosophiegeschichte als Geschichtsphilosophie. Lieferung 6, Band II, Bogen 11–20; Lieferung 7, Band II, Bogen 21–25; Lieferung 8, Band II, Bogen 26–30.

Weinberg, Siegfried: Erkenntnistheorie. Eine Untersuchung ihrer Aufgabe und ihrer Problematik. Berlin: Carl Heymanns Verlag. 1930. viii + 134 pp. 7.20 M.

Weiss, Paul: The Nature of Systems. Reprinted from *The Monist*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co. 1930. 73 pp.

Dewey, John: Construction and Criticism. The First Davies Memorial Lecture, delivered February 25, 1930, at the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University. New York: Columbia University Press. 1930. 25 pp. 60 cents.

NOTES AND NEWS

Professor Edgar S. Brightman of Boston University delivered the first series of the Adams Lectures for 1930 at Bloomington, Indiana. The subject of the lectures was "The Problem of God" and they will be published soon in book form.

At the University of Virginia, Scott M. Buchanan has been promoted from Associate Professor to Professor of Philosophy and Charles M. Davenport from Acting Assistant to Assistant Professor of Philosophy.

The International Congress for Mental Hygiene, to be held May 5 to 10, at Washington, D. C., will be attended by many foreign delegates, some of which will be available for lecture engagements. Information may be obtained from Dr. George S. Stevenson, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

At the meeting of the Philosophy Section of the Ohio College Association, April 3 and 4, at Ohio State University, the following officers were elected for the coming year: President: D. L. Evans, Secretary-treasurer, H. T. Houf; Adviser, T. B. Birch.